

# MANAGING RESPONDENTS' AWARENESS OF MODE OPTIONS IN SEQUENTIAL MIXED-MODE SETTINGS

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# Awareness of mode alternatives in mixed-mode settings involving CAWI

When CAWI is available for household surveys at Statistics Portugal we usually adopt a **'push-to-web'** mode organization (partly sequential and partly concurrent) in which **CAWI is initially presented without any reference to other modes (CATI and/or CAPI)**

**Not mentioning other modes in initial communication in order to:**

**Maximize CAWI answers and earlier responses**

e.g., Even for less CAWI prone respondents for which only household composition is required (outside age range for survey)

**Avoid possible unintended consequences of confronting respondents with the need for mode choice (e.g., Medway & Fulton, 2012)**

e.g., Potential nonresponse due to:

- Unrealistic expectation of later higher availability for a different mode;
- Awareness of different stages may reduce sense of urgency in response;
- Increased response complexity with choice overload, and possible enhancement of negative dimensions of each mode.

## However, ...

Earlier awareness of different modes may also entail advantages, such as:

- Providing greater **adjustment to respondents' preferences** by allowing higher flexibility (possible reduction in perceived burden and increased satisfaction);
- Reassure those for which CAWI is unlikely to be a viable mode that there are alternatives, thereby **limiting negative views of the survey and promoting institution**, which might lead to less overall willingness to cooperate, even in other modes;
- **Increase the timeliness/proportion of CAWI answers** by those respondents who wish to avoid being contacted by interviewers (CATI or CAPI).

For example, results from Lynn (2020) suggest a possible increase in online answers (with no impact on final RR) when subsequent CAPI for nonrespondents was explicit from the outset.

# When to mention alternatives modes?

We attempt to balance these apparently opposing perspectives by ...

- Having an **adaptive and responsive design with segmented mode transitions and communications**, supported by a multimode contact strategy that selectively mentions other modes;  
  
e.g., longer CAWI exclusive phase for respondents with higher likelihood of answering CAWI, accompanied by different timings for reference to other modes in case of nonresponse;
- **Allowing mode switches throughout the data collection period**, and providing that information if a contact to our helpdesk requests a different mode or reveals difficulty with the assigned mode;
- **Selectively including the possibility to request an interviewer within the CAWI questionnaire** when the selected person is not the one who listed household residents (and is already answering online);

# When to mention alternatives modes?

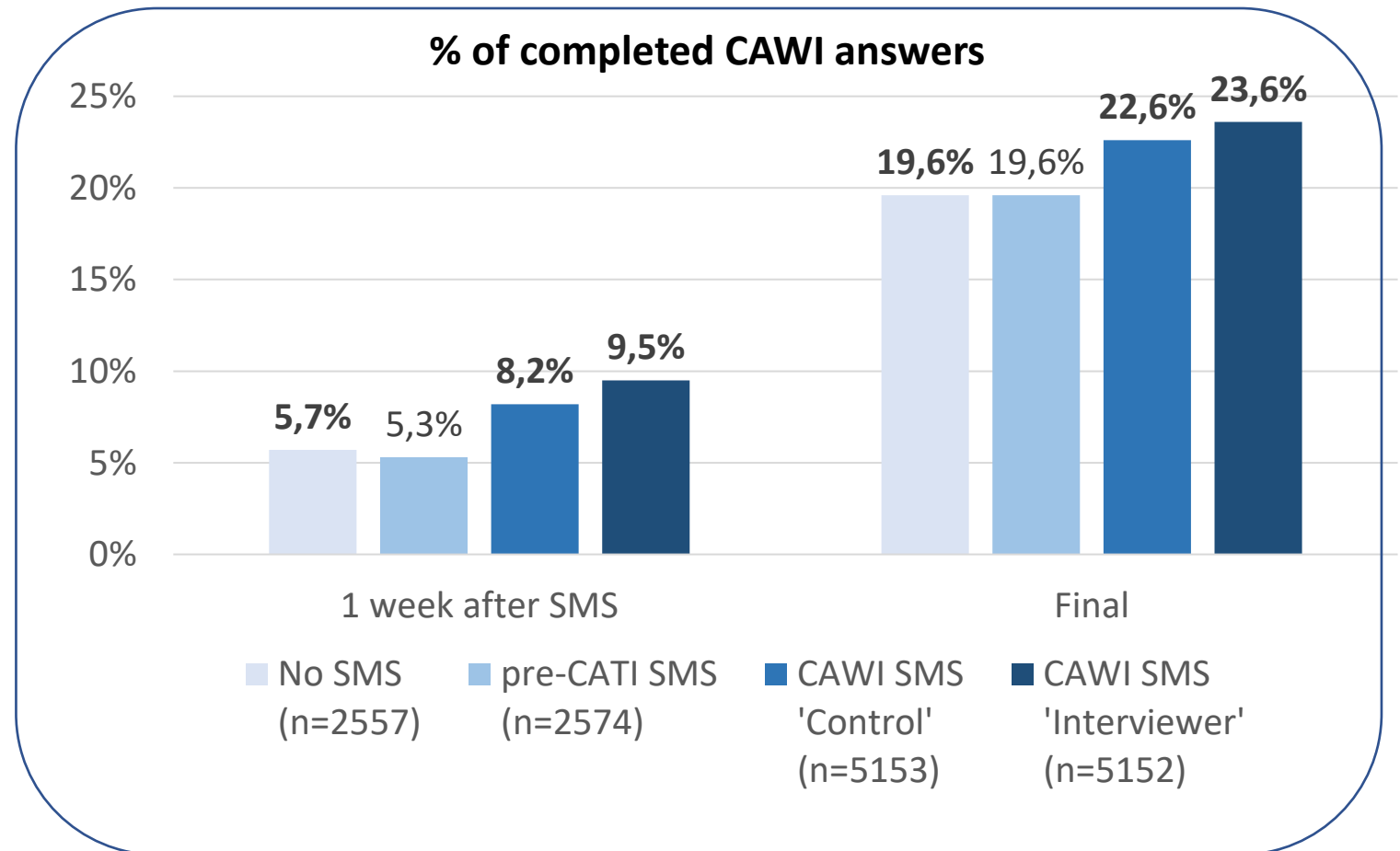
In addition, we directly addressed this issue by testing different approaches:

- Recent **experimental tests on the impact of anticipating our usual timing for a reference to subsequent interviewer contacts** in case of CAWI nonresponse:
  - Test of adding an early SMS reminder promoting CAWI with vs. without mention of interviewers
  - Test of additional email reminder with interviewer reference for segments with longer first CAWI phase

# Text message CAWI reminder

*'Mind the interviewer...'*

- Experimental test of an **SMS reminder for CAWI** at an early stage of data collection of the 2022 Adult Education Survey, which included versions **with vs. without mention of subsequent contact by interviewers**
- Significant impact of SMS CAWI early reminder
- **Mentioning interviewer contacts increased early CAWI answers**, but difference was attenuated by the end of data collection



Ongoing replication and extension to longitudinal settings...

# Additional reminder for last CATI segments

With current mode organization scheme, final segments transitioning from CAWI remain without reminders for a long time.

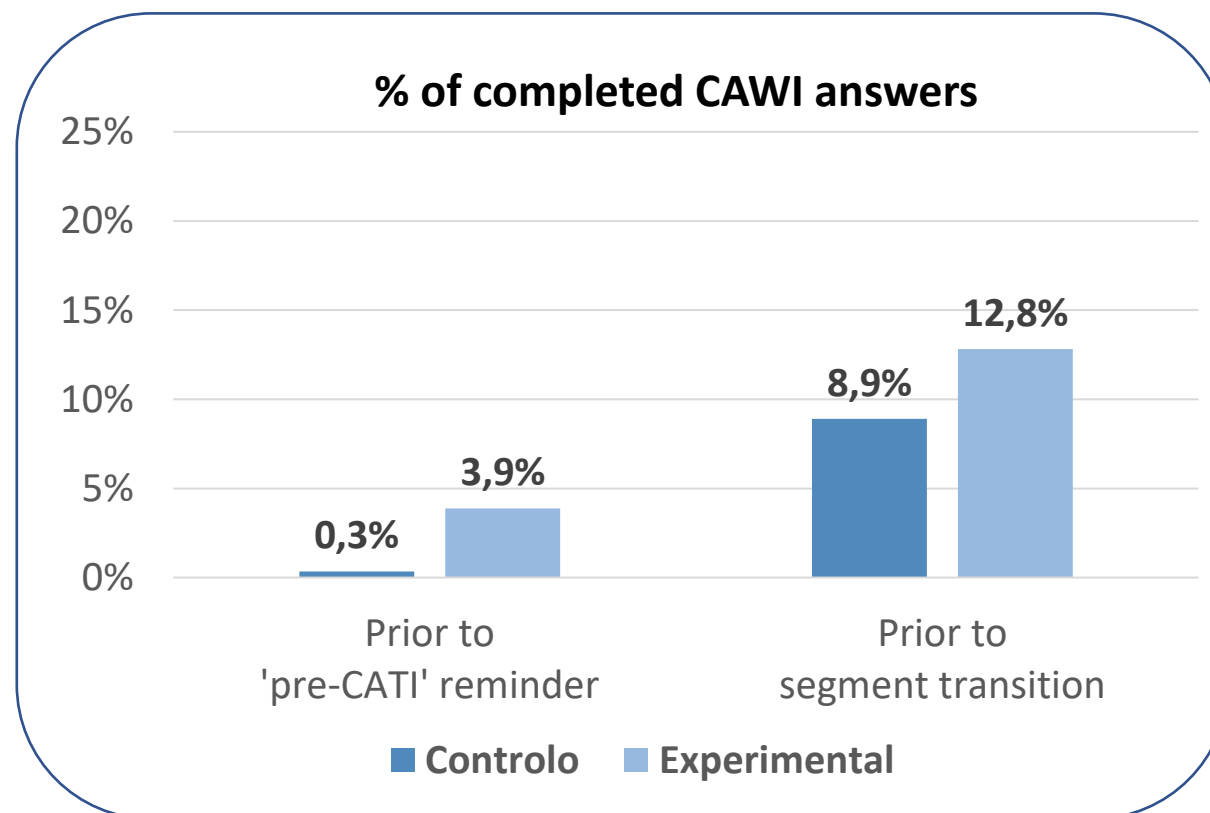
Experimental test of an **additional email reminder** (prior to the pre-CATI deadline reminder), in which contacts by interviewers are already mentioned, for the last segments.

- Survey on the Living Conditions, Origins and Trajectories of the Resident Population (2023)

**Control group** (n=1450)

**Experimental group** (n=4359)

- **Impact of additional reminder remains significant at the moment of nonrespondent households transition to CATI**



# DISCUSSION

- In some situations, mentioning the existence of other modes (not necessarily offering a choice!) may be associated with positive impacts;
- Direction and magnitude of impact of alternative mode awareness may depend on the specific alternative modes under consideration and its interaction with respondents' characteristics/profile. This may be adequately taken advantage of within an adaptive and responsive design;
- The framing of alternative mode presentation may also be crucial to its positive/negative impacts, even with slight language differences (e.g., “US Census Bureau 2019 ACS Due Dates Test Report”);
- Longitudinal surveys may reveal different patterns as awareness of different modes is also highly influenced (from the start of data collection) by knowledge from previous waves (ongoing ICT 2023 tests...)





*Expert Meeting on Statistical Data Collection*  
*26-28 October, Rome*



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**THANK YOU!**

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